NATIONAL REGISTRY OF
CPE
SPONSORS

a service of the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy

Table of Contents

What is the National Registry of CPE Sponsors?

The National Registry of CPE Sponsors is a program offered by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) to recognize CPE program sponsors who provide continuing professional education (CPE) programs in accordance with nationally recognized standards. The names of approved CPE program sponsors are published in a listing distributed throughout the country via the internet and in printed format. State boards of accountancy and their licensees can refer to this listing to identify and select CPE program sponsors.

What are the Benefits of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors?

◆ Allows CPE program sponsors to register on a national basis instead of with individual boards of accountancy.
◆ Provides licensees with a listing of quality CPE program sponsors that conduct programs in compliance with state accountancy boards' requirements and the uniform standards for continuing education in the accounting profession.
◆ Recognizes approved organizations by publishing their names on a list that is distributed periodically and appears on NASBA's Web site, www.nasba.org.
◆ Identifies CPE program sponsors who issue certificates of completion and maintain appropriate records for licensees.
◆ Improves the overall quality of CPE.

Registered CPE program sponsors are authorized to use the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' logo and approved CPE program sponsor language in all marketing materials. Many accountants look for the logo as soon as they receive program materials in the mail.

Who should Apply for Membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors?

CPE program sponsors who are willing to make a commitment to meet the highest CPE program standards are welcome to apply for membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. The National Registry of CPE Sponsors is intended solely for CPE program sponsors.

Large organizations with multiple units or branches offering CPE programs under the direction of one department should submit a single National Registry of CPE Sponsors' application on behalf of the entire organization. CPE program sponsors operating as independent units under franchise agreements or independent chapters of organizations must apply separately.

CPE program sponsors must have offered continuing professional education programs at least once in order to be considered for membership. Program sponsors planning to offer a program for the first time should proceed in accordance with the requirements specified in the enclosed *AICPA/NASBA Statement on Standards for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Programs* and apply for membership after they have completed at least one program cycle.

CPE Responsibilities

CPE program sponsors are responsible for offering programs of high quality, providing accurate and up-to-date program content, ensuring effective delivery of the material and maintaining accurate records of participation. CPE program sponsors listed with the National Registry of CPE Sponsors are responsible for meeting ALL of the standards specified in the *Statement on Standards for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Programs* and for adhering to ALL of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' requirements.

CPAs are responsible for enrolling in CPE programs that will enable them to maintain and enhance their professional competence. They are also responsible for meeting the CPE requirements of their state boards of accountancy, applicable government entities and professional or other organizations.

State boards of accountancy are responsible for setting CPE policies and for awarding CPE credit to licensees in accordance with the statutes, regulations and administrative practices in effect in their jurisdictions. Accountancy boards are the ultimate authority with respect to the acceptance of CPE credit for programs completed by their licensees.

NASBA's responsibility is to administer the National Registry of CPE Sponsors with impartiality and in the public interest.

The following summary of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors requirements mirrors the provisions described in detail in the *Standards*. Applicants are advised to read all enclosures carefully. Consideration for the National Registry of CPE Sponsors will be limited to CPE program sponsors who comply with the following requirements and standards.

Fields of Study
The programs offered by CPE program sponsors must fall within one, or more, of the CPE subject areas defined on pages 11-13.

Program Development
CPE programs must:
- Be based on relevant learning objectives and outcomes that clearly articulate the knowledge, skills and abilities that can be achieved by participants in the learning activities.
- Be consistent with the prerequisite education, experience and/or advance preparation of participant.
- Be current, technically accurate and effectively designed.
- Have been developed by individuals qualified in the subject matter and familiar with instructional design.
- Be reviewed by qualified persons other than those who developed them.

Additionally,
Group Internet-based group programs must:
- Employ some type of monitoring device to verify that ALL participants are actively participating during the duration of the course.
    - This type of monitoring could include the following examples:
        1. Participants could be provided with a password to be entered at irregular intervals.
        2. Simple questions could be asked and answered using the Web interface (even yes/no questions).
        3. Feedback-oriented questions could be asked at distinct intervals.

    Participants that fail to respond to a determined percentage (set by the sponsor) of such monitoring should be denied CPE credit for the program.
- Require a live instructor while the program is being presented.

    Program participants must be able to interact with this instructor simultaneously while the course is in progress. Participants should be given the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers during the presentation. This task can be accomplished through a variety of means, including telephone, e-mail or a computer's microphone.

Note: Once a program is recorded or archived for future presentation, it would no longer be considered a group internet-based program. All future presentations would fall under the self-study program requirements.

Self-study programs must:
- Be based on materials specifically developed and designed for instructional use. (See definition of instructional material and textbook in the Registry glossary on page 24.) (Self-study programs requiring only the reading of general professional literature, IRS publications or reference manuals followed by a final examination are not acceptable.)
- Employ learning methodologies that clearly define learning objectives.
- Guide the participant through the learning process by eliciting responses that test for understanding of the material that either offer evaluative feedback to incorrect responses or provide reinforcement feedback to correct responses. (See pages 22-23 for definitions of evaluative and reinforcement feedback.)
- Include, at a minimum, a total number of review questions equal to the number of final examination questions.
- Require participants to successfully complete a final examination with a minimum passing grade of 70 percent.
- Include at least five questions per CPE credit when using objective type questions on the final examination.
- Include program publication/revision date. The shelf life of programs in subjects that undergo frequent updates will be one year from the time of initial release, unless the subject matter changes before the year has elapsed. (See definition of program publication/revision date and timeliness in the Registry glossary on page 24 for further detail.)
- Include final examination expiration date. Sponsors should require participants to complete programs within one year from date of purchase. (See definition of final examination expiration date and timeliness in the Registry glossary on page 24 for further detail.)

Program Presentation

CPE program sponsors must:

◆ Provide descriptive materials (i.e., promotional materials, program catalogues or other items distributed to prospective participants) that enable participants to assess the appropriateness of the learning activity.

> To accomplish this, CPE program sponsors must inform participants in advance of: (1) learning objectives; (2) program prerequisites (i.e., education, experience, both or none); (3) program level (i.e., basic, intermediate, advanced, update or overview); (4) program content; (5) advance preparation, if required; (6) instructional method used for the delivery of program material; (7) amount of recommended CPE credit; (8) program registration requirements; (9) refund policy; (10) complaint resolution policy; and (11) the official National Registry of CPE Sponsors' Statement. (See example on page 25.)

◆ Ensure instructors are qualified with respect to both content and instructional methods used.

◆ Employ an effective means for evaluating the learning activity quality with respect to content and presentation.

> To accomplish this, evaluation forms must be solicited from participants to determine: (1) whether stated learning objectives were met; (2) if applicable, prerequisite's requirements were appropriate; (3) program materials were accurate; (4) program materials were relevant and contributed to the achievement of the learning objectives; (5) time allotted to the learning activity was appropriate; (6) if applicable, individual instructors were effective; (7) facilities and/or technological equipment was appropriate; (8) handout or advance preparation materials were satisfactory; and (9) audio and visual materials were effective. (See example on page 26.)

CPE Credit Measurement

CPE credits are measured by program length, with one 50-minute period equal to one CPE credit. One-half credit increments (equal to 25 minutes) are permitted after the first credit has been earned. Instruction time must be rounded down to the nearest full or half contact hour. CPE credit for:

◆ group-live and group internet-based programs is based on actual program length, with one 50-minute period equal to one CPE credit.

◆ self-study programs is based on results of pilot tests conducted to determine average completion time.

◆ instructors or discussion leaders is based upon preparation time up to twice the number of CPE credits to which participant would be entitled, plus presentation time.

◆ university or college courses is based on one semester hour equal to 15 credits and one quarter hour equal to 10 credits.

◆ writers of published articles, books, or CPE programs is based on research and writing time. (For writers to receive CPE credits, the article, book or CPE program must be formally reviewed by an independent party. CPE credit should be claimed only upon publication.)

Administrative Requirements - General

CPE program sponsors must:

◆ Provide program participants with a documentation of their participation.

> To accomplish this, the documentation must include the following: (1) CPE program sponsor name and contact information; (2) participant's name; (3) program title; (4) program field(s) of study; (5) date offered or completed; (6) if applicable, location; (7) type of instructional/delivery method used (i.e., group-live; group internet-based; self-study); (8) amount of CPE credit earned for each field of study; (9) verification by CPE program sponsor representative; (10) National Registry of CPE Sponsors identification number; and (11) time statement reading "In accordance with the standards of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors, CPE credits have been granted based on a 50-minute hour." (See example on page 26.)

◆ Retain appropriate records for a minimum of five years.

> To accomplish this, the records must contain the following: (1) program outline/materials; (2) records of participation; (3) date(s) and location(s) of presentation(s) or period during which program was available for purchase; (4) number of credits earned by participants; (5) results of program evaluations; (6) instructors, discussion leaders or program authors names and credentials; and (7) pilot testing results, for self-study programs, which includes date of pilot test; the target participant population; how the sample participants were selected; names, addresses, telephone numbers and job resumes of sample participants; a summary of participants' actual completion time and the calculation of the recommended CPE credit.

Administrative Requirements - Self-study

◆ "Pilot test" is the method used to measure the average completion time from which the recommended CPE credit is determined. (See example on page 25.)

◆ A sample of the target participant population must be selected for pilot tests of the program materials. Care must be taken to ensure that the sample group has the appropriate level of knowledge prior to taking the program.

◆ The sample group must be independent of the program development group. The sample size must be sufficient to obtain consistency and reliability of observations; however, it does not have to be a statistically valid sample.

◆ At a minimum, the sample must include **three** licensed CPAs.

◆ **Pilot testers must not be informed about the length of time the program is expected to take to complete.** This "blind" pilot test will ensure a more accurate average completion time.

◆ The pilot test must simulate the environment and manner in which the program is expected to be completed by participants.

◆ Prior to the pilot test, the program materials must be reviewed for technical accuracy, currency and sufficiency to achieve the learning objectives. If substantive changes are subsequently made to program materials, consideration should be given to conduct further pilot tests of the revised program materials to affirm or amend, as appropriate, the average completion time and recommended CPE credit. Pilot tests should be given at least during every other revision, even if major changes do not occur.

Initial Application Process

Filing Applications

CPE program sponsors applying for membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors must submit completed initial applications together with the appropriate fees and all required materials. (For a list of the materials that must accompany initial applications, refer to pages 30-31.)

Incomplete applications cannot be processed. CPE program sponsors will be notified that their applications are incomplete and will be allowed 30 days to submit the materials that were not provided with their applications. National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff will be available to work with CPE program sponsor applicants to provide assistance during the application process. CPE program sponsors who do not respond within 30 days of being contacted by the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff, will forfeit their fees and their application will be removed from the process.

The Review of Initial Applications

The materials submitted by applicants will be reviewed to determine whether the sponsor's policies, procedures and practices meet the minimum standards and requirements that CPE program sponsors are expected to satisfy. More specifically, the materials submitted by CPE program sponsor applicants will be checked to ensure that:

◆ The CPE program sponsor has carefully completed the application and, by signing the CPE program sponsor's agreement, has made a commitment to abide by the specified requirements.

◆ The CPE program sponsor's materials meet ALL of the requirements outlined in the "CPE Program Sponsor Registry's Requirements" section.

◆ The program(s) offered by the CPE program sponsor are appropriate for CPA licensees, in terms of both level and content.

National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff will make every effort to ensure that the initial application review process is completed within 60 days of receipt of complete applications.

Review Outcomes

If the materials submitted by CPE program sponsor applicants meet National Registry of CPE Sponsors' requirements, CPE program sponsors will be informed that they have been approved for membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors and will be issued a member identification number.

If the materials submitted by CPE program sponsor applicants do not meet the requirements and standards, CPE program sponsors will be informed of the deficiencies that need to be corrected and will be allowed 30 days to submit revised materials. CPE program sponsor applicants who do not submit the required revisions, or do not respond within 60 days from submitting the application, will forfeit their fees and will need to reapply for future consideration.

If the materials submitted by CPE program sponsor applicants reflect deficiencies that cannot be corrected within a reasonable period of time, CPE program sponsors will be informed that they have been denied membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. CPE program sponsors who have been denied membership may reapply as initial applicants after a waiting period of six months. Immediate reapplication by a denied CPE program sponsor under a new name, but with the same principals and/or owners is not permitted.

Materials to be Submitted

A CPE program sponsor **applying** for membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors must submit the following materials:

1. Completed National Registry of CPE Sponsors' initial application form and signed sponsor's agreement.
2. Appropriate initial application fee. (See fee schedule on page 8.)
3. A list of all programs that reflects program title, delivery method, number of recommended CPE credits and field of study. (See example program list on page 27.)
4. Written statement of policies governing record retention, refunds, program cancellation and complaint resolution (including the name and telephone number of the person handling grievances/complaints).
5. Written policy statement outlining the measures taken by the sponsor to bring program content up-to-date on a regular basis and to ensure that it is and continues to remain technically accurate.
6. For **EACH** delivery method (group-live, group internet-based and self-study) applied for, submit **ONE** program outline/materials and the following related items: (If program is group internet-based, submit online access instructions.)*
   a. Resumes of instructors/program writers (No more than six resumes need to be submitted.)
   b. Promotional materials, program catalogues or other descriptive items distributed to prospective participants (See example on page 25.)
   c. All other program materials distributed to participants and used by presenters
   d. Evaluation form (See example on page 26.)
   e. Certificate of attendance/completion (See example on page 26.)
   f. Records of participation

Additional materials to be submitted for self-study programs:

1. Final examination and answer sheet for submitted program.
2. Pilot test results from a representative sample of three independent CPAs for submitted program. (See example on page 25.)
3. $200 reviewer fee.

Additional materials to be submitted for group internet-based programs:

4. $200 reviewer fee.

In order to **maintain membership** in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors, member CPE program sponsors must submit an annual renewal application and requested materials. CPE program sponsors will be notified 45 days prior to their membership's expiration date.

*See pages 30-31 for a detailed checklist of each required item. *If program outline/materials and related items are not in complete compliance with the requirements and standards of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors, the CPE program sponsor MUST MODIFY those materials to comply in order to submit this application.*

Fee Schedule

The following fee schedule is based on the number of *different* programs the sponsor offers annually. Multiple offerings of the same program have no effect on initial application or membership fees.

Initial Application

CPE program sponsors offering 0-15 different programs	$700
CPE program sponsors offering 16-25 different programs	$800
CPE program sponsors offering 26-50 different programs	$1,150
CPE program sponsors offering 51-100 different programs	$1,750
CPE program sponsors offering more than 100 different programs	$2,300

Annual Renewal

CPE program sponsors offering 0-15 different programs	$400
CPE program sponsors offering 16-25 different programs	$500
CPE program sponsors offering 26-50 different programs	$800
CPE program sponsors offering 51-100 different programs	$1,300
CPE program sponsors offering more than 100 different programs	$1,600

All payments must be made payable to the NASBA National Registry of CPE Sponsors. **Fees will not be refunded or transferred to future transactions.**

Requirements and Responsibilities of CPE Program Sponsor Membership

Membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors requires a commitment to meet the highest CPE program standards and to maintain adherence to all of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' requirements. Upon acceptance to membership, CPE program sponsors will be provided with:

- *An official membership identification number* for required use on all certificates of attendance/completion.
- *An official National Registry of CPE Sponsor Statement* identifying the sponsor as an approved member, indicating that state boards of accountancy have final authority in awarding CPE credit, and providing NASBA's address and telephone number. CPE program sponsors are required to include this statement in its entirety and without alteration in their promotional and other materials distributed to prospective program participants.
- *A National Registry of CPE Sponsor logo* for optional use by CPE program sponsors. The CPE logo may only be used in conjunction with and adjacent to the official CPE Registry Statement. Proper use of the logo must follow the National Registry of CPE Sponsors Logo and Statement Guidelines.

Periodic Review of Sponsor Materials

After CPE program sponsors become members of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors, they will be required to periodically submit their materials to the National Registry of CPE Sponsors for review annually.

The results of the periodic reviews will be handled in the same way as the results of the reviews conducted in conjunction with initial applications for membership. (Refer to page 7 for an explanation of initial application review outcomes.)

NASBA will routinely report any additions and deletions of CPE program sponsors to state boards of accountancy. Boards will instruct NASBA on the action to be taken with respect to any CPE program sponsors who is found to be in noncompliance with the standards and requirements of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

Complaints

NASBA's National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff will investigate complaints against CPE program sponsors to determine whether any violation of the *Standards* or other National Registry of CPE Sponsors Registry requirements has occurred. Only written complaints will be accepted by the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. All written complaints will be investigated, regardless of their source.

Depending upon the nature of the complaint, the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' investigation may require: (1) access to the CPE program sponsor's participant records; (2) review of the CPE program sponsor's promotional materials; and, (3) in some instances, an independent and anonymous review of a program offered by the CPE program sponsor.

If the complaint involves an administrative infraction, National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff will request that the CPE program sponsor correct the problem and provide evidence that appropriate action has been taken. If the complaint involves program content, the National Registry of CPE Sponsors may designate a representative to participate in the CPE program sponsor's program and provide an evaluation of it. The identity of the National Registry of CPE Sponsors representative will not be made known to the CPE program sponsor when the representative registers to take the program. After the representative's evaluation has been submitted, however, the CPE program sponsor will be required to reimburse the National Registry of CPE Sponsors for the cost of the representative's program participation and any travel. The National Registry of CPE Sponsors will make every effort to ensure that the travel expenses incurred by the National Registry of CPE Sponsors representative are reasonable.

National Registry of CPE Sponsors' staff will advise CPE program sponsors of any complaints registered against them and will require their cooperation in the ensuing investigation. If the CPE program sponsor is found not to be in violation of the *Standards* or other National Registry of CPE Sponsors' requirements, the investigation will end with a notification to that effect to the CPE program sponsor. If violations are found to have occurred, however, CPE program sponsors will be required to correct them within a period of no more than 60 days. Serious violations that cannot be readily corrected will result in the removal of the CPE program sponsor from the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. CPE program sponsors who do not respond to the National Registry of CPE Sponsors' request to correct violations or who fail to provide evidence that they have taken appropriate action within the allowable 60-day period will also be removed from membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. Such CPE program sponsors may reapply for the National Registry of CPE Sponsors after a waiting period of six months. Immediate reapplication by a revoked CPE program sponsor under a new name, but with the same principals and/or owners, is not permitted.

Appeal Process

CPE program sponsors who have been denied membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors, or whose membership has been revoked, have the right to appeal the adverse decision. In the first instance, their appeal must be addressed to the National Registry of CPE Sponsors and must include a written outline specifying reasons for reconsideration. The appeal must be received by the National Registry of CPE Sponsors within 30 days of membership denial or revocation.

If the response from the National Registry of CPE Sponsors to the CPE program sponsor's appeal is negative, CPE program sponsors may appeal the decision to NASBA's Board of Directors. Notice of appeal must be made in writing and delivered by certified or express mail to the National Registry of CPE Sponsors within 30 days of the date of the notification from the National Registry of CPE Sponsors denying the appeal. The notice must include all pertinent facts and specify the basis for the appeal. The appeal will be reviewed in conjunction with all of the written materials used by the National Registry of CPE Sponsors in reaching its decision. The final decision will be communicated to the CPE program sponsor in writing.

National Registry of CPE Sponsors' Listing on the Internet

NASBA maintains a current list of National Registry of CPE Sponsors on its home page, www.nasba.org. CPE program sponsors may request that the NASBA listings be hyperlinked to their own Web sites for a one-time fee of $100.

Notification of Changes

CPE program sponsors are required to notify (**in writing**) the National Registry of CPE Sponsors of any changes in the organization's name, address, telephone/FAX numbers and/or contact person no later than 30 days after such changes occur. Changes should be reported to NASBA using the NASBA Notification of Changes Form, which is available on our Website. There is a $25.00 administrative fee that should be submitted with the form. New ownership of the sponsor organization or significant changes in the organization's structure may require new application for membership in the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

All National Registry of CPE Sponsors inquiries and materials should be addressed to:

National Registry of CPE Sponsors
NASBA
150 Fourth Avenue North, Suite 700
Nashville, TN 37219-2417
Telephone (615) 880-4200
Facsimile (615) 880-4292
Web site: www.nasba.org
E-mail: cpe@nasba.org

The CPE Fields of Study curriculum is divided into seven subject matter areas. They are Accounting and Auditing, Consulting Services, Ethics, Management, Personal Development, Specialized Knowledge and Applications and Taxation. These fields represent the primary knowledge and skill areas needed by accounting licensees to perform professional services in all fields of employment. While the NASBA National Registry of CPE Sponsors recognize that other fields of study or arrangements could be created, these seven areas are considered as the primary fields of study at this time.

Accounting and Auditing

This field of study includes accounting and financial reporting subjects, the body of knowledge dealing with recent pronouncements of authoritative accounting principles issued by the standard-setting bodies and any other related subject generally classified within the accounting discipline. It also includes auditing subjects related to the examination of financial statements, operations systems and programs; the review of internal and management controls; and the reporting on the results of audit findings, compilation and review. This curriculum covers the needs of the licensees in public practice· industry and governmental.

Consulting Services

This field of study deals with all advisory services provided by professional accountants—management, business, personal, and other. It includes Management Advisory Services and Personal Financial Planning Services. This section also covers an organization's various systems, the services provided by consultant practitioners and the engagement management techniques that are typically used. The systems include those dealing with planning, organizing and controlling any phase of individual financial activity and business activity. Services provided encompass those for management, such as designing, implementing and evaluating operating systems for an organization, as well as business advisory services and personal financial planning. For the most part this curriculum is primarily for consultants in public practice; however, internal consultants employed by large corporations may find these subjects useful.

Ethics

This field of study deals with the necessary ethical background knowledge required to adhere to rules and regulations of state licensing bodies, other governmental entities, membership associations and other professional organizations or bodies. Creating an ethical framework is absolutely necessary to be able to sort through professional dilemmas. This curriculum covers the needs of licensees in public practice, industry and government. General professional ethics programs are treated as personal development programs.

Management

This field of study considers the management needs of individuals in the three employment areas, i.e., public practice, industry and government. Some subjects concentrate on the practice management area of the public practitioner, such as organizational structures, marketing services, human resource management and administrative practices. For individuals in industry, there are subjects dealing with the financial management of the organization, including information systems, budgeting, and asset management, as well as items covering management planning, buying and selling businesses, contracting for goods and services, and foreign operations. For licensees in government, this curriculum embraces budgeting, cost analysis, human-resource management and financial management in state and local governmental entities. In general, the emphasis in this field is on the specific management needs of licensees and not on general management skills.

Personal Development

Becoming a competent people manager is the thrust of the subjects in this field of study, which covers such skills as communications, managing the group process and dealing effectively with others in interviewing, counseling and career planning. Public relations and general professional ethics programs are also treated as personal development programs.